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A View From The Top: From The ABS WA Regional Director

A View From The Top

From Michael Tindall, the ABS WA Regional Director

It seems so long ago that we all sat down around the family table to fill in the Census questionnaire. Well, the results of the Census are in! On 27 June the first data obtained through the 2006 Census were posted to the ABS website.

Whether you are involved in planning or delivering government and community services, interested in analysing the latest demographic changes or just interested in knowing more about your local community, this is an exciting time.

The most impressive part about the 2006 Census is that the data is available to the public free of charge on the ABS web site.

Not only is it free, but there are a number of new tools that can give you a much better picture of WA down to the local level. I encourage everyone to have a look on www.abs.gov.au/census.

The Census is a huge undertaking - over 30,000 collectors were employed Australia wide over the Census period to distribute and collect the 8 million forms that have been processed over the last 10 months.

I would like to thank you, the people of Western Australia, for your co-operation during the Census. Your reward is the richness of information that we are now able to proudly give back to you.

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Discover your community: First release 2006 census data is now available

Discover your community

First release 2006 census data is now available

Did You Know?

- WA's Population as counted on Census night was 1,959,088.
- 27.1% of Western Australians were born overseas
- The median age of Western Australians is 36
- The median individual income is \$500 per week
- 65% of the dwellings in WA are either fully owned or being purchased.

On 27 June, 2007, first release data from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing became available to all Australians via the ABS website. This release includes a vast amount of important information about our nation, and there is much more to come over the next 12 months.

Starting with this first release data, all the data from our national Census will be available free of charge on our website at www.abs.gov.au/census. Products that are available free online include QuickStats, Mapstats and Census Tables.

QuickStats

QuickStats is a summary of the many key Census statistics relating to people, families and their dwellings and also contains a short descriptive commentary of the results. QuickStats provides you with the key data on basic Census topics such as age, country of birth, main language spoken at home, religious affiliations and marital status.

MapStats

MapStats (formerly 'QuickMaps') gives you easy access to 2006 Census data and lets you create detailed thematic maps easily and quickly. The maps you generate can be exported in either Adobe Acrobat (PDF) or PNG (Portable Network Graphics) formats.

Census Tables

Census Tables are for people interested in data on a particular Census topic for an area. Most topics covered on the census form are available, including information on population, ethnicity, Indigenous persons, families and households. All you need to do is select a geographic area and a topic from the list, then select the table you want to create.

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Western Australian Statistical Indicators (WASI)

Western Australian Statistical Indicators (WASI)

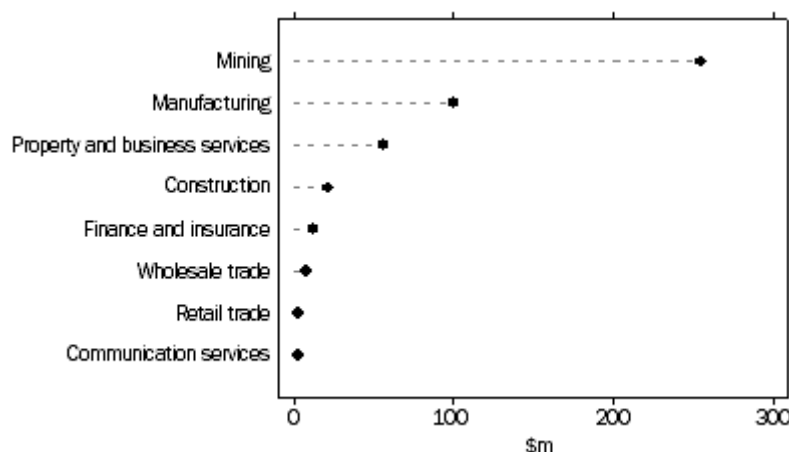
Research and Experimental Development in WA

Western Australia's recent economic boom has coincided with strong growth in the state's investment in research and experimental development (R&D). Between 2002-03 and 2004-05, the Western Australian economy grew 19.5% (\$16,796 million) as measured by Gross State Product (GSP) in current price terms, while its gross expenditure on R&D increased 57.4% (\$634 million) - almost three times faster than GSP.

While many factors have contributed to the surge in Western Australia's R&D expenditure, the expansion of the state's resources sector has had the largest impact on R&D investment. Between 2002-03 and 2004-05, the mining industry in Western Australia increased its expenditure on R&D by 130% (\$255 million).

This article examines results from the 2004-05 suite of ABS R&D surveys, highlighting the extent to which Western Australia's R&D expenditure has grown in recent years and the sectors of the economy responsible for that growth. Data used in this analysis are from the recently released publication Research and Experimental Development, Australia, 2004-05 (ABS cat.no 8112.0)

GROWTH IN R&D EXPENDITURE BY INDUSTRY, Western Australia - 2002-03 to 2004-05



General Social Survey: WA Summary

There are many, often interrelated, aspects of life important to human wellbeing such as good health, good family relationships and engagement with wider social networks, freedom from financial stress, feeling safe and secure and having access to suitable transport and information technology. In 2006, the ABS conducted its second General Social Survey (GSS) (first in 2002), a multi-dimensional survey that provides valuable information on all these aspects of life for Australian adults (persons aged 18 years and over).

This article summarises the results from the 2006 GSS for the Western Australian adult population, making comparisons between people of different age groups and household

compositions. The article also identifies where there have been changes in circumstances from the 2002 GSS for people living in Western Australia. These include: households experiencing less financial difficulties; a higher proportion of people reporting their health to be excellent or very good; an increase in the incidence of people reporting one or more personal stressors; a slightly higher proportion of people reporting they have been the victim of crime; and lower levels of participation in sport and physical recreation activities.

Changing water and energy use in Perth homes

Domestic water and energy use has been the focus of much attention in recent times. Concerns have heightened over Perth's available water supply and the use of high energy consuming appliances. With the economy growing rapidly, Western Australia's population and housing requirements have increased substantially, placing considerable pressure on the state's water and energy resources. As a result, the Western Australian Government has implemented strategies, such as rebate schemes and education campaigns, to help reduce the excessive use of water and energy in Perth homes.

A survey of Domestic Use of Water and Energy in Western Australia was recently conducted by the ABS, based on topics proposed by the Water Corporation and Office of Energy. Results showed that over the last fifteen years, Perth households have embraced a number of new technologies, including appliances that have reduced water use in their homes, although they have increased their reliance on high energy using devices, such as air conditioners. For example, between 1992 and 2006, the proportion of Perth households using dual flush toilets rose from 36% to 84%; water efficient shower head use rose from 21% to 51%; front loading washing machine use rose from 7% to 25%; and air conditioner use rose from 40% to 74%.

This article analyses data from the Survey of Domestic Use of Water and Energy, Western Australia, October 2006 (cat. no. 4652.5) and compares the results with those from past ABS surveys on water and energy use. It examines whether water and energy using behaviours and perceptions have changed over time in Perth homes.

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Client Interview: Lauren Stone from the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC)

Client Interview

Lauren Stone from the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC)

Small Business in WA

Small businesses account for approximately 95% of all businesses operating in Western Australia (Counts of Australian Businesses, ABS cat. no 8165.0).

A business is generally regarded as small if it is independently owned and operated, if it is closely controlled by owners or managers who also contribute most, if not all, the operating capital, and the principal decision-making functions rest with the owners / managers. In most cases, small businesses have been identified for statistical purposes as businesses which employ less than 20 people, including non-employing businesses.

Considering the high proportion of small businesses operating in the state, it is vital that they are provided with services that assist them to develop and prosper and remain competitive.

The SBDC

The Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) is the primary provider of information and guidance to new and established small businesses in Western Australia. The corporation provides specialist business advisory services and a variety of information workshops, as well as monitoring the impact of legislation on the small business sector.

The SBDC is committed to championing the cause of small business, developing programs and services to meet the needs of small business development, and maintaining and enhancing the independence, innovation and responsiveness of the SBDC.

SBDC'S Lauren Stone

SBDC Policy and Business Liaison Officer, Lauren Stone, is responsible for monitoring and collecting up-to-date and relevant statistical information relating to small businesses in Western Australia. This information is then used to enlighten the corporation, the Minister for Small Business and the broader community, assisting them to make informed business decisions.

Lauren states that having “reliable statistical information on small businesses is essential for the SBDC” and that they “use ABS statistics in a wide range of the SBDC’s activities”.

Lauren, who specialised in Entrepreneurship at University, is a member of the Economic Statistics Consultative Group (ESCG) officiated by the Western Australian office of the ABS. The group meets regularly on a quarterly basis and discusses the statistics behind developments in the WA economy.

Some of the key issues explored in recent ESCG meetings include the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and WA's latest import and export trends.

Lauren emphasised the importance of the ESCG, explaining that it provides an ideal forum for State Government agencies to communicate and share information and to discuss their statistical needs.

Lauren says that the SBDC’s main source of business statistics is the ABS and that they use ABS releases such as Counts of Australian Business, Including Entries and Exits (ABS cat. no. 8165.0), Characteristics of Small Businesses (ABS cat. no. 8127.0) and Small Business in Australia (ABS cat. no. 1321.0) to offer guidance to small businesses.

With the latest 2006 Census statistics, Lauren says that the Marketing Research section of the SBDC will be able to offer accurate information to assist small businesses with their business decision making processes.

Lauren, who has fulfilled her role in the SBDC for over a year, entered the organisation via a graduate program. Outside of work, Lauren is a committee member for the Institute of Public Administration Australia WA Young Professionals Network, which aims to support, develop and promote young professionals in the public sector.

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Feature Article: Water and Energy - State Supplementary Surveys

Feature Article

Water and Energy - State Supplementary Surveys

What is a State Supplementary Survey?

The State Supplementary Survey is an annual household-based survey that provides an ideal opportunity for Western Australian Government agencies to obtain high quality statistical information about specific aspects of Western Australian economic or social life which can assist in the formulation of policy strategies.

The survey is conducted free of charge as a supplement to the ABS Monthly Labour Force Survey in October each year. The State Supplementary Survey has a sample size in WA of 3,500 households which includes metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas.

Supplementary surveys must be suitable for face to face and telephone interviewing and the 'Any Responsible Adult' (ARA) method. The ARA method involves obtaining information from one individual (aged 15 years or older) per selected household, therefore this method can only be used for collecting information on topics where a member of the household can answer questions on behalf of the household.

How are topics selected?

In April of every year, the ABS' WA Regional Director sends out letters to all Directors General of Government Departments and applicable agencies inviting them to identify topics that may be suitable for the survey vehicle. A submission kit is made available to interested agencies which explains the survey process and its methodological restraints.

After submissions are received, research is conducted into the proposed topic to determine its suitability. Usually in June, the Statistical Policy Committee (SPC) which consists of ABS and State Government representatives, meets to discuss submissions and selects a topic based on State Government statistical priorities.

For the 2006 State Supplementary Survey, the SPC selected the topic of Domestic Use of Water and Energy following submissions from the Water Corporation and the Office of Energy. Both submissions were found to be suitable for a combined survey.

Survey development and the role of State Government

The WA Supplementary Survey involves significant development and testing, both of the questionnaire and the interview process. After the 2006 survey topic was selected by the SPC, extensive research was conducted into existing survey data and questionnaires. The ABS convened a user group consisting of representatives from The Water Corporation, Office of Energy, Department of Environment and Conservation, Department for Consumer and Employment Protection (Energy Safety division), Western Power and Department of Housing and Works.

The user group plays an important role in identifying what data items are required to make informed policy decisions. Throughout the process the ABS consults with the user group as part of the development of the survey to ensure that the ABS collects and disseminates data that is of the highest quality and meets the needs of WA State Government.

2006 Domestic Use of Water and Energy

The results of the 2006 State Supplementary Survey on the Domestic Use of Water and Energy (ABS cat. no. 4652.5) were released on 19 April, 2007.

The survey provided a snapshot of WA's household water and energy usage, which allowed the most common consumption patterns to be identified.

As at October 2006, the majority (95%) of households in WA rely on mains water supply for their water needs, and of these 22% also have bore water and 9% have a rain water tank.

Nearly three-quarters (71%) of WA's homes have air conditioning, and most (89%) have heating. Only about one in six households (15%) have a solar hot water system.

Nearly all Perth households have gardens and lawns (92%), and more than two-thirds (68%) of these used mulch on their garden in the previous year. Over a third (36%) of Perth households recycle water into the garden, and most households in Perth (84%) use dual flush toilets.

Water use

The most common uses for rain water were for drinking (68%), watering the garden (43%) and food preparation (32%).

More than a quarter (26%) of Perth households used bore water. Over a quarter (26%) of Perth households have a front loading washing machine. More than a third (38%) of Perth households have a dishwasher.

Energy use

Almost a third (32%) of WA households use ducted evaporative cooling and a further quarter (25%) use reverse cycle split system air conditioning. Portable unflued gas heaters warmed just over a third (36%) of all WA households. More than half (56%) of WA households have a mains gas hot water system.

Cooling and Heating

Cooling units

Three-quarters of WA households used an air conditioner or evaporative cooling (567,600 or 71%).

Of the different cooler types and positions the most common units used in WA homes were ducted evaporative coolers (32%) followed by reverse cycle split system air conditioners (25%).

Heaters

An estimated 709,800 WA households reported having some form of heating (89%). Almost half of these households reported that their main heater was a gas heater (46%).

One in five households used a reverse-cycle air conditioner as their main heater (21%), 17% used wood and a further 14% used an electric heater. Gas was the most popular form of heating across all household sizes.

Further information

The 2007 survey will be on the topic of 'Community Preparedness for Emergencies'. While submissions for the 2008 topic have now closed, look out for next year's opportunity to have a survey run in 2009.

If you have any queries about the State Supplementary Survey process or would like to discuss how your agency could develop a survey with the WA ABS Office for no cost, please contact Cal Hoad on (08) 9360 5947.

Agriculture: Releases from the 2006 Agricultural Census

Agriculture

Releases from the 2006 Agricultural Census

In 2006, the ABS conducted a census of 185,000 agricultural businesses. This is the largest mail out collection the ABS undertakes and the second largest collection apart from the 5 yearly Population Census. As a part of the ongoing effort to improve the coverage and quality of agricultural statistics, the 2005-06 Agricultural Census adopted the Australian Taxation Office's Australian Business Register as the new frame for the collection.

The first publication from the Agricultural Census, Principal Agricultural Commodities, Australia, Preliminary (ABS cat. no. 7111.0), was released on 17 May and was based on a response rate of 91%. It included state and territory production and area figures for broad acre crops such as wheat, barley and rice, as well as livestock numbers for cattle, sheep, lambs and pigs.

Preliminary Agricultural Statistics for WA

In 2005-06, Western Australia was Australia's largest wheat producer with 9.4 million tonnes of wheat; 37% of the total Australian wheat production (25.4 million tonnes).

Western Australia was also the largest producer of lupins for grain (83%) and canola (45%), while it was the second largest producer of oats for grain (36%) and barley for grain (26%).

Western Australia had the second largest number of sheep and lambs of any state or territory (23.0 million); 25% of all Australian sheep and lambs.

Further Releases

There are additional publications planned for release during 2007 based on data from the 2005-06 Agricultural Census.

Value of Principal Agricultural Commodities Produced - Preliminary (ABS cat. no. 7501.0) was released 25 June 2007. This release provides preliminary estimates of the gross value of production of selected crops, livestock slaughterings, and livestock products at the state and national level for 2005-06.

Selected Agricultural Commodities, Australia, Preliminary (ABS cat. no. 7112.0) will be released towards the end of July. It will contain estimates of all commodities at the state level, including a greater range of crop, horticulture and livestock statistics.

Water Use on Australian Farms (ABS cat. no. 4618.0) will be released in August. It will contain estimates of agricultural irrigation water use by crop, other agricultural water use and water sources at the Australian and state levels. Regional level water data will be released later in the year.

Agricultural Commodities, Australia (ABS cat. no. 7121.0) will be released in late 2007. It will include final data for all commodities, as well as statistics on the number of agricultural

businesses (size, industry and the estimated value of agricultural operations).

As a supplement to 7121.0, a number of datasets containing small area data (Statistical Division and Statistical Local Area) will be released on the ABS website.

The ABS also plans to release a range of sub-state geographic level data in early 2008. These outputs will generally be available as spreadsheets, data suitable for use in Geographic Information Systems, and possibly as maps. Standard outputs will be produced to approximate as closely as possible various regional structures such as river basins and Natural Resource Management regions.

Customised Services

The ABS can customise a product to meet your specific policy, planning, research and commercial analysis needs. ABS consultants are experts in producing customised tables. For further information, call the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or Daniel Lester on (03) 6222 5943.

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Statistical News: Developments in ABS Statistics

Statistical News

Developments in ABS Statistics

Services We Provide for State Government

The WA office of the ABS has recently launched a 'Services We Provide For State Government' page on the ABS website. This page provides information on the ABS services available to Western Australian Government including access to training, outposts, information and statistical consultancies and more.

Please visit the ABS website and click on the 'Services We Provide' link towards the top of the screen to navigate to the WA page under the 'State/Territory Government' heading.

Post Enumeration Survey

On 5 June, 2007, the ABS released two important publications with strong links to the 2006 Census. These include the Census Post-enumeration Survey (PES) publication, Census of Population and Housing - Undercount (ABS cat. no. 2940.0), and Australian Demographic Statistics, December quarter 2006 (ABS cat. no. 3101.0) .

The PES publication provides estimates of net undercount in the 2006 Census, as well as information on how the estimates were calculated.

The Australian Demographic Statistics publication describes how data from the 2006 Census was combined with PES data and an estimate of Australian residents overseas on Census night (plus some other minor components) to derive a new population base for 30 June 2006.

Migration

The Information Paper Statistical Implications of Improved Methods for Estimating Net Overseas Migration, Australia, 2007 (ABS cat. no. 3107.0.55.005) was released on 25 May. The information paper presents analysis of improved estimates of Net Overseas Migration

using the “12 months out of 16 months” stay in Australia for determining residency for migration purposes.

Estimates using the improved methodology will be used in compiling population estimates from September quarter 2006 onwards. Estimates for September and December quarters 2006 were released on 5 June 2007 in Australian Demographic Statistics, December Quarter 2006 (ABS cat. no. 3101.0).

The Business Longitudinal Database

The ABS has recently released an Information Paper on the Business Longitudinal Database (ABS cat. no. 8164.0) to seek comment on its future content. This publication provides an overview of the data contained in the Business Longitudinal Database (BLD) and examples of its analytical potential.

The BLD comprises characteristics and financial data sourced from the first Business Characteristics Survey, ATO administrative data (including BAS and BIT data), as well as data on exports and imports from the Australian Customs Service.

Whilst the publication does contain some initial data from the BLD its primary purpose is to encourage feedback from BLD users as to the adequacy of the topics and financial variables contained in the BLD and the methodology by which productivity is to be measured.

On 21 June, John Blanchette, ABS Director Business Demographics, provided an information session to WA clients on the future directions of the BLD and potential business demographic outputs.

John stated that “the BLD has been developed by the ABS to be a rich time series of characteristics and financial information for a sample of small and medium businesses. It will provide a valuable analytical tool for users to understand business-level performance and productivity drivers.”

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Client Liaison: Summary of Events

Client Liaison

Summary of Events

ESCG and SSCG Meetings

During the June quarter, the ABS held the second series of consultative group meetings with key clients from State Government.

The Economic Statistics Consultative Group met on 22 May and included presentations on the Resources and Agricultural industries in WA. In addition, Amy Gardos from the ABS Statistical Consultancy Unit presented results of the 2006 State Supplementary Survey which were published in ‘Domestic Use of Water and Energy, WA, Oct 2006’ (ABS cat. no. 4652.5).

The Social Statistics Consultative Group met on 29 May and consisted of an interactive

session to discuss a selection of themes upon which the WA ABS Social Statistics Unit is considering undertaking research. Themes discussed included changing family structures, mobility patterns of migrants, and population and labour mobility in WA.

Working with the ATO

The Australian Taxation Office recently invited the ABS to do a series of presentations tailored towards owners of small businesses. ABS representative Andy Separovic, supported by Margaret Garner and Bodi Ledwij, delivered information regarding ABS products and services available to small business.

The presentations emphasised how ABS data could be used by small businesses to better understand the demographics of their target markets. In addition to this a demonstration of the ABS website was conducted which highlighted the abundance of useful information that is freely available to the general public.

The presentations were well received and allowed the ABS to effectively communicate the importance of using ABS statistics to assist small businesses in their decision making processes.

Visitors from Vietnam

The ABS has a commitment to strengthening relationships with international statistical agencies.

On Monday 11 June 2007, the WA office of the ABS welcomed a delegation of statisticians from Vietnam. The purpose of their visit was to gain an insight into the role of an ABS regional office and the opportunities and challenges it faces.

The delegates met with Regional Director Michael Tindall and the senior executive group to discuss issues concerning Business Statistics Centres and how they operate in a regional office environment, Client Services and their operations, and an overview of the WA office analytical program.

The visit prompted many questions and discussion from the Vietnamese delegates and provided a basis for future collaborations.

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Recent Releases: Publications of Interest

Recent Releases: Publications of Interest

Publication Title	ABS Catalogue Number
Australian Year Book	1301.0
Australian Economic Indicators	1350.0
WA Statistical Indicators (WASI)	1367.5
Census QuickStats	2061.0
Census MapStats	2063.0
Census Tables	2068.0
Discover Your Census	2915.0
Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Australia	3401.0

General Social Survey: User Guide, Australia, 2006	4159.0.55.002
Arts and Culture in Australia: A Statistical Overview	4172.0
Domestic Use of Water and Energy	4652.5
Australian National Accounts	5206.0
International Trade in Goods and Services	5368.0
Business Indicators, Australia	5676.0
Labour Force, Australia	6202.0
Internet Activity, Australia	8153.0
Building Approvals, Australia	8731.0
Sales of Motor Vehicles, Australia	9314.0

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Next Edition

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The September edition of Stats Talk WA will feature an article on the new strategic partnership between the ABS and the WA State Government, which will focus on developing a WA Performance Indicator Framework.

In addition to this, Stats Talk WA will highlight relevant information on new statistical developments, projects, publications, seminars and training sessions. The newsletter will also provide an update on ABS client activity in Western Australia.

WATCH OUT FOR THE SPECIAL STATS TALK WA CENSUS EDITION!

About this Release

Stats Talk is a newsletter produced by the Western Australian office of the ABS. It provides information about new developments, publications, seminars, training and reviews

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